

R. Kelly prosecutors narrow time span

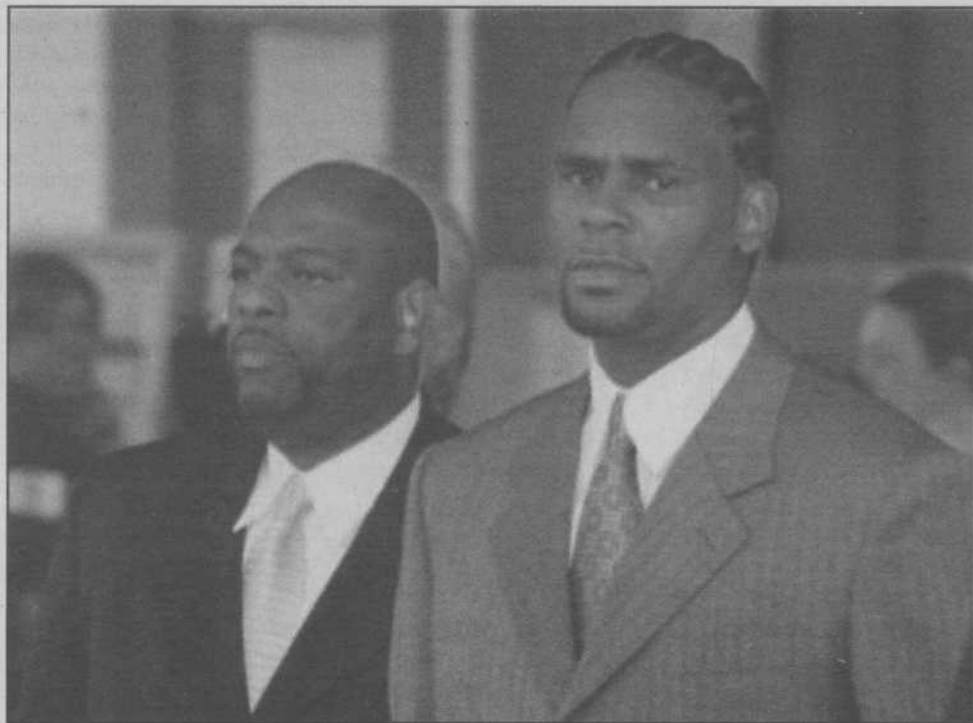
CHICAGO (AP)—Prosecutors narrowed the timeframe in which they allege singer R. Kelly was videotaped engaging in sex acts with an underage girl, but defense attorneys say it's still too broad.

The new time span announced Wednesday still covers nearly three years — January 1998 to October 2000.

Defense attorney Ed Genson says prosecutors need to narrow that to two days or the indictment should be dismissed.

Kelly was arrested in 2002 and has pleaded not guilty to 14 counts of child pornography.

Judge Vincent Gaughan last month agreed that the prosecution's timeframe was overly broad, so prosecutors reinterviewed witnesses and re-examined the tape, which includes commercials on a television in the background. They cut 18 months off their original timeframe of November 1997 to February 2002.



R&B singer R. Kelly, right, arrives for a court appearance earlier this month in Chicago, where a judge set a court date to determine the age of the tape in the R. Kelly case.

"Hopefully, this will clarify the issue and we can move on," said Assistant State's Attorney Robert Heilingoetter. The case has already dragged out for three years.

Three witnesses also testified about the videotape

Wednesday, including a woman who said she was a longtime friend of the female allegedly seen on the tape with Kelly.

Simha Jamison, 21, of Oak Park, said she recognized her friend because they both had the same hairstyle

at the time. She said the girl was about 14 then.

"We got that haircut in 8th grade," Jamison testified.

The judge didn't immediately rule on the motion to dismiss the indictment and continued the hearing to next week.

Kelly won a Grammy in 1997 for "I Believe I Can Fly" and is also known for sexually charged music like "Bump N' Grind."

Lil' Kim suing former cohort

NEW YORK (AP) - Rapper Lil' Kim struck back Monday at a trial witness who helped to secure her false-statements conviction and yearlong prison sentence, filing a lawsuit accusing the witness of unlawfully using her name and image to promote a DVD.

In a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, she accuses James "Lil' Cease" Lloyd of preparing to

release a DVD entitled, "The Chronicles of Junior M.A.F.I.A. Part II: Reloaded."

She says the DVD, like a predecessor, was unauthorized and improperly uses her name, image and likeness, amounting to false advertising and false endorsement. She's seeking \$6 million in damages.

She also says Lloyd has announced publicly that the

DVD will include interviews with him and other members of the Junior M.A.F.I.A. group explaining their involvement with her trial.

There was no telephone listing in Los Angeles for the company that produced Lloyd's DVD, Ground Zero Entertainment, which also is listed as a defendant in the lawsuit. Lil' Kim, whose real name is Kimberly Jones, was convicted after she told a grand jury that she didn't see her manager and a friend at the scene of a 2001 gunfight outside WQHT, the Manhattan rap station known as HOT 97. A man was injured in the shootout.

Lloyd and Antoine "Banger" Spain, Brooklyn rappers who once teamed with Lil' Kim in the Junior M.A.F.I.A., testified they saw her manager and the friend she denied seeing at the radio station with her.

Lil' Kim says in the lawsuit that she separated from the musical group in 2001 over personal and business differences.

Lil' Kim, 30, was closely associated with the late Notorious B.I.G. As a solo artist, she has become known for her revealing outfits and suggestive lyrics. She won a Grammy in 2001 for her part in the hit remake of "Lady Marmalade."

Mistrial declared in Notorious B.I.G. suit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A mistrial in the Notorious B.I.G. wrongful death case means his family won't get any immediate answers about his slaying but can file a new lawsuit seeking to link the unsolved 1997 killing to the Los Angeles Police Department's Rampart corruption scandal.

U.S. District Judge Florence-Marie Cooper declared a mistrial Wednesday after she expressed concern at a hearing Tuesday that the LAPD had deliberately withheld evidence. Her clerk and attorneys on both sides confirmed the ruling, and a written order was to be issued Thursday. There were only three days of testimony in the trial, which began June 21 but was interrupted when an anonymous tip led to the discovery of large numbers of LAPD documents that hadn't been turned over to family attorneys.

B.I.G., born Christopher Wallace, was 24 when he was gunned down March 9, 1997, while leaving a crowded late-night party at a Los Angeles museum. The rotund New York rapper also known as Biggie Smalls was one of the most influential hip-hop artists of the 1990s. His albums "Ready To Die" and the posthumously released "Life After Death" are regularly listed among the best in the genre.

His family's lawsuit against the city and LAPD claimed corrupt LAPD officer David Mack arranged to have Wallace killed at the behest of Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight, and that LAPD officials covered up Mack's involvement.

Family attorneys, who had requested either a mistrial or default, plan to refile the suit with new allegations against the LAPD and Mack's one-time partner Rafael Perez. The city had previously asked the judge to continue the trial, arguing that any new documents largely revolved around hearsay. Assistant City Attorney Don Vincent said Wednesday he wasn't sure what

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Producer's suit targets Ashanti

NEW YORK (AP) - Ashanti was accused in a civil court case of abandoning her first music producer when he asked for money after she became commercially successful, an allegation she denied on the witness stand.

Genard Parker was an established music producer when Ashanti, then 16, approached him in 1996 for help, his lawyer, Jasmine Khalili, said.

"This case is about abandoning the people that help us succeed," Khalili charged in opening statements Monday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, where the contract dispute is being heard by a jury. She said Parker helped Ashanti in his Bronx home-based studio for eight months when she was "just another teenage girl with a nice voice."

Ashanti, who then lived in Glen Cove, on Long Island, eventually signed with a record company, and Parker released her from his contract with the understanding that he could produce two songs on her first album and receive a \$50,000 advance plus royalties, Khalili said.

Two successful albums that sold more than 6 million

copies mean Ashanti owes Parker millions of dollars in royalties, the lawyer said.

"She has never paid him, and, just as importantly, she has never thanked him," Khalili said.

On the witness stand, Ashanti, now 24, denied that Parker had played an influential role in her career.

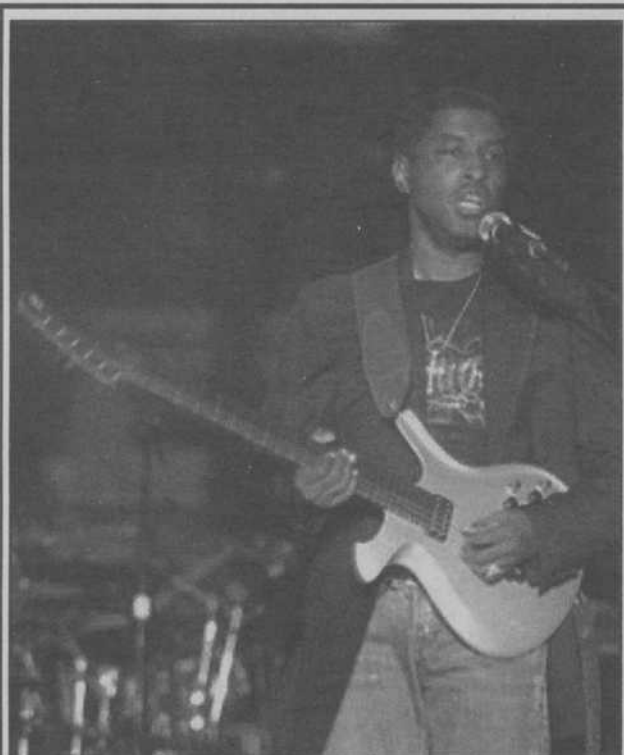
She said praise she tossed his way on a videotape made in 1997 to help promote her efforts for a recording con-

tract was "a little bit of hype."

"I was excited," she said. "I thought I was getting a record deal."

Her lawyer, Harry Stokes, said it was only after the success of the second album that Parker claimed his contract was violated and demanded money.

Parker, now of Ellenwood, Ga., testified that Ashanti was pleased with the work he did for her in 1996 and 1997.



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